



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 July 2025

by R C Shrimplin MA(Cantab) DipArch RIBA FRTPI FCI Arb MCIL

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 July 2025

Appeal Reference: APP/M5450/W/25/3359307

51A Dabbs Hill Lane, Northolt UB5 4BZ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr. S. Blackwell against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application reference is PL/2525/24.
 - The development proposed is a “detached two-bedroom new house”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issues

2. The first main issue to be determined in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surroundings, in the context of planning policies for the area. The second is the effect of the proposed development on surface water run-off from the site.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located in an extensive area of residential buildings along Dabbs Hill Lane, which is a long meandering road that includes blocks of flats as well as maisonettes. The area has a pleasant, spacious character, with wide grass verges and open grassy areas, planted with trees. Dwellings are generally set back from the highway with open front gardens in front of individual homes. The area is generally suburban in character, with generous open spaces, but it has good access to local facilities and transport connections and is well integrated in the wider urban area.
4. Number 51A Dabbs Hill Lane is a first-floor maisonette, above number 51 and linked to numbers 53 and 53A in a semi-detached layout. The building stands at a sharp bend in the road, on a road junction, and it adjoins its neighbour at 229 The Heights. As a result of the layout on this part of Dabbs Hill Lane, the appeal site (together with its neighbours) has a wide frontage to the highway, but it tapers towards the rear.
5. The appeal site takes up a section of this road frontage, between the two buildings at 51A Dabbs Hill Lane and 229 The Heights. This area is currently laid out as an informal amenity space, as a surfaced area with some domestic paraphernalia and space for car parking.

6. It is now proposed to construct a two-storey detached (two-bedroom) dwelling on the appeal site, together with associated parking, landscaping and bin store provision.
7. The 'National Planning Policy Framework' emphasises the importance of achieving sustainable design and points out the status of Development Plan Policies, which is established in the primary legislation. Applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
8. The 'National Planning Policy Framework' also emphasises the aim of "achieving well designed places" in the broadest sense (notably at Section 12), while making effective use of land and encouraging economic activity. It is aimed at achieving good design standards generally, by adding to the overall quality of the area and being visually attractive and sympathetic to local character and history, although it is also recognised that appropriate change may include increased densities. The achievement of good design includes protecting existing residential amenities and providing good standards of accommodation in new development.
9. Of course, good design also encompasses the need to ensure that new development functions well in a technical sense and does not, for example, provide an inadequate drainage system, resulting in flooding as a result of water running off private land.
10. Policy D1 of the 'The London Plan' (dated March 2021) enjoins local Councils to plan for growth, undertaking assessments of their areas to achieve this. Thus, Policy CS1.A of the 'Harrow Core Strategy' (dated February 2012) sets out the Spatial Strategy for the area, stating that the Harrow and Wealdstone Intensification Area is to provide almost half of the new homes that are to be built during the plan period.
11. Policies D3 and D4 of 'The London Plan' go on to stress the importance of good design in new development, while Policy CS1.B in the 'Core Strategy' likewise promotes good design, responding to local character. Other parts of Policy CS1 address specific planning considerations, while Policy DM1 of the 'Harrow Council Development Management Policies' (dated July 2013) also focusses on achieving high standards of development. Other development management policies address specific design issues.
12. The Council's 'Supplementary Planning Document: Garden Land Development' (adopted in April 2013) "seeks to clarify ... how the Council intends the local presumption against garden development to be applied", without introducing new policy. It is a material consideration in this appeal, but it does not have the force of the statutory Development Plan. Similarly, the Council's 'Supplementary Planning Document Residential Design Guide' (adopted in December 2010) is relevant to the appeal but does not form part of the Development Plan.
13. The existing garden area on the frontage of number 51A contributes a sense of openness to the streetscene, even though it is surfaced and lacking in greenery, which would improve its appearance. The proposed development would reduce the area available for off-street parking and would make it more difficult to incorporate soft landscaping into the layout, in the future. At the rear, the new house would have the benefit of only a very small external space.

14. The proposed new house would be smaller and less bulky than its nearest neighbours, but it would be two storeys in height and constructed of brickwork under a tiled roof, in keeping with the architectural character of its neighbours. It would be set back from the highway, broadly in line with its neighbours but, even so, it would appear cramped between the two existing buildings.
15. Thus, notwithstanding the current nature of the site, the proposed development would intensify the developed character of the land and would create a cramped and unattractive streetscene in this part of Dabbs Hill Lane. I am aware that other developments have been permitted elsewhere in the locality, but I have considered this scheme on its own merits, and I am convinced that the proposed new house would harm the character and appearance of the area, and undermine planning policies that are intended to protect existing character and to promote development in the Harrow and Wealdstone Intensification Area.
16. Moreover, the proposals would be contrary, in particular, to Policies D3 and D4 of 'The London Plan' and Policy CS1.B in the 'Core Strategy'. The scheme would also be contrary to Policy CS1.A in the 'Core Strategy', which seeks to protect garden land, although I am conscious that this Policy cannot prevent all such schemes, simply as a matter of principle.
17. I am convinced, in short, that the proposed new house would have a clearly harmful effect on the character and appearance of the surroundings, contrary to Policies in the Development Plan and the 'National Planning Policy Framework'.
18. I turn, however, to the question of surface water run-off from the site. It must be acknowledged that such practical considerations can be especially important and Policies SI 12 and SI 13 in 'The London Plan', as well as Policy CS1.U of the 'Harrow Core Strategy' and Policy DM10 of the 'Harrow Council Development Management Policies' specifically address the issue of flood risk.
19. In this case, the site has already been surfaced although the gravel area would allow some on site retention of rainwater, rather than instantaneous run-off. Nonetheless, the new house and associated works would require rainwater disposal to be carefully considered, of course.
20. I accept, however, that a Surface Water Drainage Strategy could be made the subject of an appropriately worded condition, necessitating the submission and approval of a strategy for surface water disposal and attenuation, prior to the commencement of development, and also requiring adherence to the strategy thereafter. If there had been no other objections to the proposed development, the concern regarding surface water run-off from the site could have been resolved in this way, therefore.
21. Evidently, the appeal site lies within an established urban area, which is "sustainable" in planning terms, while the contribution that the appeal scheme would make to economic activity and the additional residential unit that would be created both weigh in favour of the appeal. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the harm that would be done to the character and appearance of the surroundings clearly outweighs the benefits of the project.
22. Hence, I have concluded that the scheme before me would conflict with both national and local planning policies (including the Development Plan) and that it ought not to be allowed. Although I have considered all the matters that have been

raised in the representations, I have found nothing to cause me to alter my decision.

Roger C. Shrimplin

INSPECTOR